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# FACT SHEET

## Incident Command System (ICS)



FSCD, Bangladesh



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*With support of the US IOTWS Program, the Government of Sri Lanka is taking measures to adopt ICS for Disaster Management to improve emergency response emergencies such as the 2004 Tsunami, pictured above.*

### What is ICS?

The Incident Command System (ICS) is a single standardized emergency management system designed to allow users to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any size or type emergency incident. It functions to incorporate and fully utilize all assigned resources and expertise from multiple agencies, and can operate in a multi-jurisdictional environment. The ICS provides accurate information, strict accountability, planning, and cost effective operations and logistical support for any incident.

Developed in California in the mid-1970s, ICS is now mandated by presidential directive for all emergency response in the United States. In the past decades, it has been used to deal with virtually every kind of natural disaster as well as many other types of emergencies such as the September 11th terrorist attacks, the crash of the Columbia Space Shuttle, and hurricanes in Florida and along the Gulf Coast.

### Why is ICS needed?

All emergencies and crisis events are by definition chaotic and highly dynamic, creating physical, emotional, and social disorder. The Incident Command system provides a means for government agencies to effectively manage such incidents and restore a modicum of order in a chaotic environment.

ICS is a way to organize the functions of a team, so that every aspect of an incident response is addressed. This leadership model enables a team to communicate, cooperate, and get the job done.

### Functional Areas of ICS

ICS establishes the following five major functional areas for managing an incident:

- **Command** – Provides leadership and establishes incident objectives as well as having overall responsibility for managing the incident;
- **Operations** – Develops and oversees tactical operational activities needed to accomplish incident objectives;



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**For a more comprehensive overview of ICS**

Go to

[www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/inci.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/inci.html)

[www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/ics\\_disc.html](http://www.nifc.gov/fireinfo/ics_disc.html)

[www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dmp/welcome.htm](http://www.fs.fed.us/global/aboutus/dmp/welcome.htm)

**US IOTWS Program Contacts**

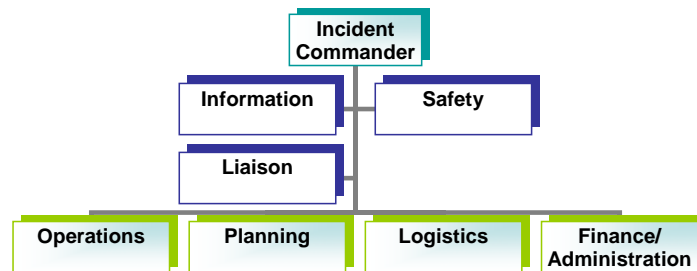
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- **Finance/Administration** – Oversees all administrative and financial aspects of the incident including cost tracking, procurement, payments, compensation, etc. in support of objectives;
- **Planning** – Coordinates planning, resource ordering and release, record keeping, mapping, technical expertise, and documentation necessary to accomplish objectives; and
- **Logistics** – Oversees the development and use of infrastructures (facilities, transportation, supplies, communication, food, etc.) to support responders as they work towards accomplishing incident objectives.



Each functional area is lead by a team leader, and the entire ICS is led by an Incident Commander.

**Advantages of ICS**

ICS is flexible and allows for organization expansion or contraction in a modular fashion as incident needs dictate. Thus, as incidents change in complexity or operational focus, the ICS can accommodate accordingly. The ICS is structured to integrate any type of resource including police, military, technical experts, international resources, and NGOs, and can be used to manage sudden onset disasters, long-term relief efforts, or non-emergency events.

**How will the US IOTWS Program contribute to the ICS development?**

The US IOTWS Program will partner with an Indian Ocean country for consultation, training, and implementation strategies to integrate ICS into their disaster response system. The US program will then share these lessons learned in a regional workshop with participants from the Indian Ocean region.

**About the US Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System (IOTWS) Program**

The US IOTWS Program is part of the international effort to develop tsunami warning system capabilities in the Indian Ocean following the December 2004 tsunami disaster. The US program adopts an “end-to-end” approach—addressing regional, national, and local aspects of a truly functional warning system—along with multiple other hazards that threaten communities in the region. In partnership with the international community, national governments, and other partners, the US program offers technology transfer, training, and information resources to strengthen the tsunami warning and preparedness capabilities of national and local stakeholders in the region. For more information please visit [www.iotws.org](http://www.iotws.org).